

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 131107
ORIGIN AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-05 CIAE-00 EUR-08
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DRAFTED BY AF/E:PGSMITH:JJ
APPROVED BY AF:DBBOLEN
PM:ISO - JBURGESS
AF/E:RSPOST (DRAFT)
INR/PMT - NSMITH
PM/DCA - ML BRECKON
-----080530Z 104197 /14
R 072028Z JUN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 131107

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, MPOL, MP, SO, UR

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PHOTOS OF SOVIET INSTALLATIONS

REF: PORT LOUIS 532

1. PHOTOGRAPHS TO WHICH WALTER REFERRED WERE PASSED TO RAMGOOLAM ON A CLASSIFIED AND HIGHLY SENSITIVE BASIS BY AMBASSADOR MANHARD IN MID-1975. WHILE OTHERS OF BERBERA INSTALLATIONS WERE MADE PUBLIC AT THAT TIME (FOR EXAMPLE IN SENATOR BARTLETT'S REPORT OF HIS VISIT TO BERBERA, RELEASED IN JULY 1975), THE PHOTOGRAPHS THEMSELVES ARE NOT READILY OBTAINABLE.

2. OUR CONCERN IS THAT WE NOT BE IDENTIFIED WITH A LABOUR
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PAGE 02 STATE 131107

PARTY ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT THE MMM AND THE SOVIETS BY PUBLICIZING BERBERA AT A VERY DELICATE POINT IN BOTH US-SOMALI RELATIONS AND INDIAN OCEAN ARMS CONTROL EFFORTS. EVEN UNCLASSIFIED US-ORIGIN PHOTOGRAPHS IF BRANDISHED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE THAT EFFECT, AND WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT YOUR SOVIET COLLEAGUES WOULD GET THE INFORMATION BACK TO MOGADISCIO.

3. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED SOME NON-US MATERIALS WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL TO WALTER, AND DO NOT OBJECT TO YOUR LETTING

HIM KNOW ABOUT THEM, OR PASSING THEM TO HIM IF YOU ARE SATISFIED THAT THIS CAN BE DONE WITH NO RISK OF THEIR ATTRIBUTION TO US. WE ARE POUCHING TO YOU AN ARTICLE FROM LE FIGARO OF JANUARY 3, 1977 WHICH LABELS SOMALIA A SOVIET PROTECTORATE AND DESCRIBES BERBERA AS THE SITE OF "VERY IMPORTANT, ULTRAMODERN INSTALLATIONS AND A GIGANTIC AIRFIELD ... AT THIS LITTLE SOMALI PORT." WE ARE ALSO POUCHING A STUDY ENTITLED "THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA," PUBLISHED IN THE UK IN FEBRUARY 1975 BY THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF CONFLICT, WHICH GOES INTO SOME DETAIL ABOUT SOVIET MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN BERBERA AND ELSEWHERE IN SOMALIA.

3. WE ARE A BIT CURIOUS WHY WALTER IS UNABLE TO RETRIEVE EARLIER PHOTOGRAPHS FROM RAMGOOLAM'S OFFICE, AND WONDER IF IT MIGHT NOT BE USEFUL TO MENTION WALTER'S PROJECT OFF-HANDEDLY TO RAMGOOLAM AT SOME POINT TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT IN SOME INTERNECINE LABOUR PARTY INTRIGUE.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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